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ABSTRACT

This nine-part literature review examines ways in which community college administrators are dealing with the rapidly changing social, political, and educational environment. Part I examines some of the external pressures placed on community colleges to change both policy and programs, and argues against reactive responses to these changes. Part II reviews a number of alternative administrative models for change implementation, including those that emphasize group/interactive processes, those that view change as a managerial function, those that consider change to be a function of the political/social environment of the institution, and those that emphasize strategic planning. In part III, components and characteristics of the planning process are examined. Part IV presents the results of interviews with four community college administrators concerning problems of planning and implementing policies at the institutional level. Part V explains the "Toward Educational Excellence" project, as an example of operational planning based on a 5-year master plan using a task force structure. After part VI addresses problems related to goal selection and institutional communications, part VII examines trends in planning and change management in community colleges. The final sections offer conclusions and a 45-item bibliography. (UCM)

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The Search for "Viable Alternatives"

Planning Theory and Community College Administration

Mgmt. Adm. 597E: Independent Research in Policy and Planning

An Independent Research Project

Presented to Dr. Karl Johnson

University of Missouri-Kansas City

by

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Fall, 1986

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Table of Contents

I. The Community College: The Reactive Response . 1

II. Models for Planning 5

III. The Planning Process: Recurring Components and Characteristics 15

IV. Local Administrative Interviews: The Realities of Planning and Change 22

V. "Toward Educational Excellence" A Model for Making Change 29

VI. Problem Areas: The Delicate Balance of Goals and Communications 35

VII. Trends in Community College Change: A Model for Making Change 38

VIII. Conclusions: Dealing with the Challenges . . . 48

IX. References 52

I. The Community College: The Reactive Response

The American community college movement represents the development of an institution which extends the promise of opportunity for higher education to all citizens. As with other colleges and universities, the community college is faced with the critical challenges of technological, sociological, demographic and financial changes. Due to the immediacy of the community it serves, however, demands from the community affect the administration in the development of solutions of these problems. The community college administration faces a critical challenge to implement institutional change. This study will review the process of administrative change as it occurs in the community college environment from the sources of literature, a document review and administrative interviews. In addition, this study will examine suggested models, components, problem areas and trends in change implementation.

A review of the history of the community college demonstrates its unique position both as a post-secondary and a local government institution. Education was perceived at the end of the last century as an "avenue of upward mobility", and as "contributor to the community wealth" (Cohen and Brawer, p. 21). The community college concept met the need to "develop

through the vast demands placed on the schools" (p. 21). Growing rapidly in the 1920s, "junior colleges" offered lower division work and were governed through local districts and/or state funding. They continued to grow in number until 1947 when President Truman's Commission on Higher Education stated that all Americans should have free access to two years of post-secondary schooling; the community college was thereby provided an important role (p. 4). By the 1950s and 1960s, the term "community college" was used for "the comprehensive publicly supported institution" (p. 5), and the number of community colleges had grown to 1,250 (p. xv). As the number grew significantly, they also grew in diversity. According to Zoglin, each community college varies greatly in "philosophy, size, form of governance, in almost every conceivable way", with only one common element (p. 36): the "close relationship to the constituency" of the local community college district. Richardson also notes this "intimate relationship with the community it serves" (p. 36), as the college is dependent on the community for its support and the "forces at work within the community" contributing to the process of change. As a result of this community-bound base, the community college is best known for its "innovative and diversified programs to meet the rapidly changing needs of society" (McCabe

and Skidmore, p. 248).

Being thus dependent on the community, the community college receives local pressures and constraints for policy and program development. Keller reports that in general, higher education "has entered a revolutionary period" in which vast changes are occurring (p. 25). These include great shifts in finances, numbers and compositions of student populations, curriculum and program demands. Also, instructional alternation of time and methodology, post-secondary competitiveness, technological advances, faculty demands and rapid growth of external controls (p. 26) bring a new environment to college administrations. Keller has thus declared the end of the "laissez faire era" of campus administration. To survive the environment and the ordeal of these threats within the community, the community college must plan for "these and other upheavals" and construct a more active "change-oriented style." Such an administrative position provides for "better planning, strategic decision-making and more directed change (p. 27). This process occurs only through the use of new procedures, structures and attitudes as the "new era of academic strategy" has begun.

Other authors have noted that the community college "cannot remain static" during such shifts of "social pressure" (Martorna and Kuhns, 1975). Adminis-

tration is "not yet adequate for turbulent times," and administration too frequently is a "reactive response."

James Hammons, editor of Organization Development: Changing Strategies also states that a "new strategy" is demanded at this time when it is necessary to "change and to use planned change." Community colleges are required to "move in new directions (p. 1) and plan for the upheavals."

Richardson, Blocker and Bender (1972) agree with this observation and state that administration has been using a "crisis management" approach (p. viii), with "confrontation tactics for which administrators have been "ill prepared to cope". The "storm clouds for the community college" are pressing issues that must be dealt with for the very survival and maintenance of the institution. The wide use of administrative "reactive responses", new demands on curriculum, new student bodies and other contributory problem areas all suggest that the outmoded strategies need to be replaced with "viable alternatives" (p. vii).

II. Models for Planning

A number of suggested alternative administrative models for change implementation are available. Although varying greatly in philosophy and methodology, these models can be classified into general groups on the basis of group/interactive, managerial, political/social, strategic planning and analysis emphases.

One way of viewing the process of planning for change is an emphasis on group/interactive processes as influenced by group dynamic theories. Authors explaining change in community college on this basis include Alfred, Martorana and Kuhns. Alfred sees dynamic institutions as a result of the growth of the 1980s and "pressure of the changing state and federal requirements and other issues facilitating the decision-making process" (p. 8). These pressures force a change in "operating needs and styles of leadership" from the bureaucratic, vertical and formal communication lines to group process development. Martorana and Kuhns explain change with an "interactive forces theory" (p. 173) model that represents a "perceptual gestalt" of all changes in higher education. These changes are classified as personal, extrapersonal and goal hiatus. Change itself, then, is "driven or energized by the result or effect" of each of these forces which are "separable, describable, and

to some extent, predictable." They further discuss the use of five stages during change implementation and identify a specific growth pattern during the process. This concept of interactive forces has been translated into a plot using numerical values to assess these forces during academic change. This interactive model permits those involved to "evaluate . . . monitor . . . and predict outcomes" and promote "remedial action" to assure implementation of a change policy" (p. 173). According to the authors, it is only through the understanding of such forces that academic changes in colleges and universities can be understood (p. 193).

Another illustration of a group/interactive explanation of change is Richardson's theory of participating planning. He states in Governance for the Two-Year College that

> The community college needs a management design which stresses a humanistic view of educational organization. In participative management, various groups within the educational community cooperate in formulating educational objectives and in deciding methods of accomplishing the objectives. . . . It is related to, but not identical with, pure democratic management.

Twelve elements of the interactive process are presented including activities of programming, budgeting and evaluation. Through an emphasis on this interactive participation, motivation, then, is more likely to occur (p. 130) because of involvement in the selection of objectives and processes, serving as a "bond to

unite the human with scientific dimensions of educational management". The group/interactive explanation provides a model of community college change.

Several authors view the change process as a managerial function. Richman and Farmer, for example, recognize that intentional external planning is decision-making, and as such, part of the managerial responsibilities. Institutional change is understood as "a useful division of managerial function" (p. 19) which includes planning, innovation, controlling organizing, staffing and direction, community leadership, and motivation (p. 79). These components are essential for the continued function of the organization. The administrative structure is responsible for the long-range planning and the implementation of programs through the allocation of resources. Administrative decisions "provide direction and establish constraints" and contribute to the definition of roles for all who belong to the organization. As this process is carried out "tensions are created" that may threaten the effectiveness of the institutional endeavor (p. 213). "To deal with these forces," the administration must provide a system of governance" that will promote the "sharing of authority" among internal forces, establish a "system of checks and balances" and thus promote an integrated process of

making managerial change. (p. 213). Richman and Farmer admit that planning may be the most crucial function with regard to the organization's external environment. The managerial function includes the "control" of those activities designed to compel events to conform to plans and to recognize the "deviations" and alter activities. The functions are most smooth when planning is future-oriented (p. 20) and serves as a "close and continuous link" between the planning and control which is involved at all organization activities.

Keller in Academic Strategy states that there are "deep roots" in the academic world that are not conducive to planning. He notes that post-secondary institutions have historically lacked organizational awareness and a limited view of change (p. 100). In order to improve change mechanisms, colleges must "strengthen their managements and shape academic strategies for themselves" (p. 121). This is accomplished by each institution questioning its role in the "American higher education network". Management of colleges is a "peculiar activity", and institutions must "concentrate on good management" (p. 122) before any strategic planning can occur. Managerial expertise, according to both of these references, is a preliminary to dealing with institutional change.

A third group of researchers considers change to be a function of the political/social system environment of the institution. Baldridge recognizes the contributions of "organizational theorists" who have increasingly stressed the "impact of the external environment on complex organizations" (p. 507). This "social context" has grown in its ability to affect post-secondary institutions in a much stronger fashion. In fact, Baldridge sees these forces as a "threat to the autonomy" that academic institutions "have so painfully built up over the years" (p. 508).

Donald Walker in The Effective Administrator advocates the acceptance of the political bartering process occurring in the negotiating for change. This presents a dialectic approach of thesis and antithesis (p. 44) from which, if properly managed a "creative synthesis or compromise" will result. Administrators need to recognize the legitimacy of opposition and "accept criticism" as an administrative fact of life (p. 47). The creation and acceptance of such a climate for criticism encourages participation in problem-solving activities. Another advantage of the recognition of the socio/political influence in change processes is that information about problems will be more accurate.

Paola, Lehmann and Blischke in Higher Education by Design: The Sociology of Planning recognize the socio/

political influence of change in a very specific fashion. Their work represents a final report of a three-year study of a statewide planning for higher education. They have documented increasingly significant linkages between parts of higher education between higher education enterprises and various governmental agencies, private foundations and professional associations. They reviewed statewide planning by degrees of differentiation, distribution of authority, types of planning and educational autonomy (p. 498). When successful educational change is implemented, "leadership coalitions" are necessary (p. 540). These change networks can be divided into areas of program formulation, decision-making responsibility delegation, and the recognition of contingencies. The development of such networks has "improved" the educational autonomy and level of performance" of colleges and universities. Review of statewide networks (p. 546) identifies the "appropriate set of planning tasks" to implement change.

The strategic planning emphasis on the change process at the post-secondary level is fairly recent. Several additional authors dealing with strategic planning and others have focused on the community college environment specifically.

An initial reference to strategic planning is found in Handbook of College and University Adminis-

tration. According to Thompson, the major characteristic of strategic planning is that of alternative decisions and adjustments of requirements to resources.

King and Cleland in Strategic Planning and Policy see change as arising from the organizational process of addressing critical questions:

1. What is/has been the purpose of the business?
2. What is the present business?
3. What should be the business of this organization?
4. How can we act to insure that our business is what we want?

Only by organizational analysis can change as a function of strategic planning occur. Planning, then, is a system of planning a planning process, a decision subsystem, and a planning management subsystem (p. 37). The information system and the organizational process must both function to promote effective planning. Uhl, in Using Research for Strategic Planning, considers strategic planning as

> an analytical approach that encompasses an assessment of the future, the determination of desired goals in the context of the future, the development of alternative courses of action to achieve those goals and the selection of course of action from among those alternatives.

Uhl also summarizes that this process should include feedback and evaluation in the process of goal achievement.

Two authors, Myrun and Eadie, apply strategic planning at the community college level. Myrun in Strategic Management lists components of promoting change in the community college setting. He also reiterates Eadie's emphasis on external environmental factors and stresses that these relationships are essential as strategic management and the "appropriate relationships" (p. 35) with groups that the community college needs input from to achieve its mission (p. 35).

Eadie reviews the Cuyahoga Community College as a model of strategic planning based on King and Cleland. He notes the use of organizational resources to respond to external environmental opportunities. Eadie also differentiates in kinds of planning at the community college level. He recommends the use of an incremental approach in implementation and in the development of networks and linkages.

The final group of change theorists view change as a process of analytical analysis. Perhaps the most comprehensive guide to post-secondary analysis is that of Peterson in his chapter "Analyzing Alternative Approaches to Planning" from Improving Academic Management. He provides a complex conceptual framework for understanding planning and change implementation. He also focuses on an "integrated planning function" but adds that the "broad institutional perspective is

useful" (p. 114). Peterson's analysis also includes planning typologies of organization level, substance and decision type. The "type of decision is related to the type of planning" and has implications for the type of data collected in an information system for analyses to be productive and for the decision process utilized (p. 122). In his analysis, the planning process is organized into dynamic and participation bases (p. 122-123). He presents an extensive outline of "Theoretical Planning Modes and Primary Dimensions" that ranges from coordinated anarchy to formal rational approaches. He concludes his premise by noting that designing a planning process is an "evolutionary activity" (p. 160) and that only a "well-devised evaluation plan" can provide a rationale for institutional decisions.

James Hammons' text, Organizational Development-Change Strategies, published by the New Directions for Community Colleges, Eric Clearinghouse, 1982, presents organizational development as a concept having vast potential for meeting the community college challenge. Organizational development begins with

> the analytical strategy, that recognizes individual needs and goals as well as those of the organization, and encompasses a sufficient variety of techniques to allow a contingency approach to each situation (p. 1).

The analysis of the organization is fundamental to the

function of organizational development. Woodman and Muse in the next chapter provide analytical models in terms of subsystem effects of organizational development, interventions and system effects or organization development programs. He also warns that "measurement of outcomes in higher education is often elusive" but that the positive results of the process variables would be "ample justification for the use of techniques in community colleges" (p. 42). George A. Baker, in the following chapter, presents "The National Institute: A Partnership for Development", and notes wryly that when organizational experts review the community college, "it is difficult to determine why an organization such as this should work at all". (p. 70).

III. The Planning Process: Reoccurring Components and Characteristics

In the previous literature review and analysis of community college change, certain components and characteristics are discussed by the various authors. Representative authors clarify these concepts as they relate to the process of planning. In this discussion of terms, components are considered to be a part of the element of planning itself and characteristics are considered to be those properties or qualities that accompany the change process. Ken Eble states that "looking ahead" is an inescapable part of the administrator's job. These components and characteristics are a part of the administrator's job of looking ahead.

Common components in the literature related to planning were the recognition of change as a needs analysis/assessment, information availability, and a procedural process. For a planning condition to occur, the recognition of need and assessment of the circumstances are listed as the initial starting points. Blackwell states that "the first step toward increased efficiency is the recognition of need for improvement" (p. 104). Richardson also traces the origins of the change process (p. 221) to the

> realization that there is a need to formalize . . . a generalized awareness

> of the existence of a problem that does not lend itself to a solution by existing policies or procedures. This stage of awareness occurs . . . as a response to problem identification although it may be in anticipation.

Richardson also writes that in two-year colleges the complex external forces may be examined and related to the institutional internal pressures and responses (p. 16). Gollattascheck comments on the "analysis" of the communities which reveal people's needs as a means for information in planning change. Keller reviews this process as a "looking outward" which focuses on keeping the institution "in step with the changing environment" (p. 143). Keller also states that this sort of analysis and assessment represents a blend of "national and economic analyses, political maneuvering and psychological interplay." Gloria and Holmes in their writing "Assessing the External Environment" identify those "environmental factors" relevant to mission, impacting conditions and trends for "creating viable futures for institutions."

This sort of analysis and assessment for planning cannot occur without adequate information. Uhl notes that the effectiveness of planning depends on the availability of appropriate information and that too frequently there is limited information available. Such analysis cannot occur without accurate and reliable knowledge of the setting. Information from external

factors should be considered, in terms of social context, institutional relationships, geographic scope and time frame, according to Glover and Holmes (p. 89). This article reviews in depth the sources of information for institutional planning responsibilities.

Planning is also assumed to be a process and an activity which provides the momentum for change. Hammons, for example, sees planning as a "process" incorporating activities of problem solving, renewal and collaboration. Those participating in this change process assume a "catalyst" role, and the concept of "action research" (p. 5) provides the necessary input into the process. Groff continues this interpretation of planning as a process/procedure of

> an objective methodology based on external and internal assessments for formulating a set of decisions about what the college will become in the future. (p. 51)

Likewise, Richardson recognizes planning as a procedure

> through which objectives are established, plans for achieving those objectives are designed and procedures are developed to evaluate institutional effectiveness as well as the relative contributions of persons involved.

The view of planning as an ongoing process, continuing through implementation and as a response to the environmental factors is a consistent theme throughout the literature. Keller has succintly described the planning of academic strategy as a "battle plan" to

enable the institution with a mechanism to "get stronger and better in the teeth of historical conditions."

Reoccurring characteristics of planning seen in these authors were those of coalition/networks, the variety of time frames, emphasis on the dynamic alterations of planning processes and the personality dimensions of those individuals implementing such plans.

Paolo's "theoretical framework" for planning illustrates the use of "interorganizational networks" demonstrating structures and processes as they affect the functions of constituent parts in the implementation of change. Eble notes that administrators often act as a "bridge" to provide input and involvement in the process of planning, whether it refers to faculty, students or community. At this point, the "right questions" must be asked of the "right persons" in a form that can be useful. In the administration of planning, the administrator must recognize the importance of groups involved in the life of the institution, their concerns, provided information, and their focus with the rest of the institution.

Several authors discuss the dynamics of the administrator's personality in the process of planning and change. Eble reviews the "excellent" administrator as an individual who

> by force of character or personality . . . shows a concern for more than self-interest of individual faculty members or even of a department or college. The administrator must be a centering force, capable of establishing confidence that someone is absorbing and reflecting upon and pulling to use the wealth of particulars that surrounds everyone. . . . The administrator must be a thoughtful and reflective individual as well as an active one. (p. 63-64)

Keller catalogues individual characteristics of "best academic leaders." These include abilities of having a "multiple awareness" of circumstances and moving in directions "where movement is easiest" (p. 130). Successful administrators also maintain vast amounts of crucial internal and external information at hand. Perhaps the most important of these personality attributes is the ability to promote and monitor "quality" as the planning process proceeds. The administrator is much like a "navigator" steering "through treacherous channels of constant transformation" (p. 122). As such, the leadership role is inevitable, and the administrator provides "emotional interjections that jolt faculty, students and staff . . . and hold out visions of potentialities" (p. 122).

Richardson notes that difficulties at the community college occur because of the adoption of the philosophy that the community college is to be "all things to all people" (p. 201). In such circumstances, the administrator must personally

> convince faculty that existing practices are inadequate and that proposed changes merit commitment. The mechanism for accomplishing changes in the attitudes and behavior of faculty is the governance process.

The effective administrator elicits the commitment of organizational members in an active participation through the decision-making process (Vaughn, p. 201). Gollattascheck reiterates administrative response of "commitment to the mission of the institution" (p. 72). With this commitment, the administrator translates the institutional mission into "competency language, which is to the point, goal-oriented and related to the variety of activities and conditions." These abilities are developed through an individual "ongoing appraisal system", providing analysis and a basis for modification of future actions. The individual administrator, then, continues the process of reassessing the circumstances and responses to the situations in an effort to improve ability to implement change.

The administrator can also be considered as a "change agent", as institutional responsibilities are executed. According to Havelock, as a change agent, the administrator should adopt the following goals:

> knowledge of process of change, knowledge of process of change, knowledge of relevant resources, awareness of new practices, building of activity in the system, holding a view of the total system, constantly working to build institutional self-renewal. (p. ix)

The individual must deal with these issues as planning occurs. The administrator on an individual basis must delicately balance his/her approach to planning and change. Executive leadership daily deals with the two major responsibilities of administration; those are the concurrent maintenance of the organization and changing the organization (Gollattascheck, p. 129). Thompson (p. 4) also recognizes the precariousness of the administrative dilemma. Plans and institutions must both meet the criteria of being flexible and sensitive. It is through the daily tasks of administration and each unique circumstance that the process of maintenance of organizational flexibility and sensitivity occurs.

IV. Local Administrative Interviews: The Realities of Planning and Change

A large part of the community college responsibility is the implementation of policy into the framework of the institution and community. Interviews with four community college administrators reveal common themes regarding the problems of planning and implementing policies at the community college level. During the interviews volunteers were asked general questions about working definitions of administration and the kinds of planning and related activities used to carry out their duties. These administrators all alluded to a general division of formal and informal activities related to procedures. One area of concern each addressed is the growing challenge of administrative duties as outside forces have become more frequent interferences into the administrative process. They further feel that more abilities were needed to deal with the challenges of the environment.

Administrative duties are defined by several administrators in terms of the process of balancing interests as one proceeds with duties. One administrator describes his role as "an attempt to persuade and direct", and the "attempt to do the right thing at the right time." Another individual says that administration was an effort to please "many segments" much

like juggling when one tries to keep all of the balls in the air simultaneously." Administrative duties are also referred to as a "game of chess" that deals with expecting the unexpected and "management by exception."

All four administrators acknowledge the formal and informal planning processes and recognize the importance of each. Perhaps the most elaborate formal planning system is the Five-Year Master Plan in operation at one community college system with several campuses. Two individuals interviewed are a part of this system and discussed the components and advantages. The Five-Year Master Plan operates on a rotating schedule, with participation of district representatives forming a committee. This group provides a general guide and the strategies evolve from recommendations in policy developed by the board and officers. The general guide and strategies become the basis of the Five-Year Master Plan, and each year the plan is updated to include an additional year and the revision of the current year's plan. The group continues communication with other campus groups in a process which feeds back into the institutional information system. As a working document on an annual basis, specific objectives are listed for the current year, and record-keeping becomes a part of the planning process for the document itself. For specific goals task force groups are selected, all to

incorporate and contribute to the process of planning for the multi-campus district. From these tasks, one may establish daily and monthly goals. A Director of Planning and Development coordinates all efforts and is responsible for the development of the planning process. Both administrators feel that this document, as a working paper, provides an adequate structure of "getting a hold" of the tasks awaiting them as administrators. The Five-Year Plan also enables the process of policy to be changed into something that can be planned. One administrator has a yearly report based on the processes and an accompanying fiscal report representing specialized plans.

One administrator in another institution stated that planning does little good because it is always subject to the designs of higher level administrators and outside political forces. Within his own program, however, planning takes the emphasis of meeting the daily emergencies with no effort to view the future. Planning that does occur is subject to the many influences, and currently few plans are effective in institutional change. Another administrator at yet a different institution points out that an evaluation of growth should be the basis of planning, and that a good program should never be stagnant. The importance of demographic and other information from community, busi-

ness and industry was a very necessary part of the formal planning process.

Informal kinds of planning occur within this setting. One administrator mentions the importance of the use of "grass roots" involvement to those most near the implementation level. Another individual refers to the establishment of daily/weekly/monthly goals with provision for interruption. Part of the responsibility of the position is to deal with those kinds of daily interferences.

An alarming degree of concern was registered by all of the participants of the survey. These individuals are well-experienced administrators, and they all felt that the arena of decision-making and planning is subject to growing levels of interferences and inability to deal with certain sources in the planning process and implementation process. One administrator pointed out that one must be very sensitive in the planning process to those areas which will cause difficulty. One administrator reports that he feels a "loss of structure", as plans are frequently unrealistic and one receives little reinforcement to help on the implementation of the plans. Another administrator openly declares that "politics is the culprit that keeps administrators from the planning process." Another administrator points out that he experiences a "lack of

ability" to control the planning process and is also frustrated by the administrative environment in which so many outside forces can alter the daily tasks.

All four administrators state that they are trying to follow some plan. The individuals with access to the Five-Year Plan seem to have the most positive attitudes regarding the ability to achieve goals with the use of the Five-Year Plan.

From these interviews, the concepts of planning and change implementation can be summarized into two administrative models according to function. These are the formal administrative plan and the actual procedure of carrying out the formal plan with the accompanying necessary modifications.

The formal plan may be adopted at the individual, divisional or institutional level. It becomes a document which directs the administrator's actions. The formal plan states specific goals and objectives to be accomplished, and these often reflect administrative job descriptions at the individual level and institutional goals, missions, or philosophy at the divisional or institutional level. As a formal working plan, subdivision is evident in terms of action to be taken toward accomplishment of the formal plan. These subdivisions often include a time frame or scheduled completion date. These formal plans are a result of

information and the goals to be accomplished within the context of the planning. Every effort is made at the formal planning stage to use this information to provide a realistic plan. During this attempt to evaluate the implementation process, projections into how to address internal and external constraints and influences to balance these interests are made. From this sort of evaluation, interferences into the planning process can be minimized from both the internal and external environments.

The concept of planning as a procedure represents the implementation of the plan and the "fitting" of the plan into the framework of the institution. From these interviews, it is evident that although thinking through potential problem areas in the formal stage is essential, it is also essential at this implementation stage as well. External and internal influences affecting the administration of these changes may not make themselves known until the actual implementation. Other complications to the change process are new variables, daily emergencies, new policies and regulations.

In recognition of the discrepancy between the formal plan and the procedure, all of the administrators expressed a need to continue to develop expertise in the administrative planning and implementation process. The recognition of the growing number of

confounding internal and external interferences also indicates the need for administrative training and change and planning. The presentation of the model from these interviews represents the continued challenge making institutional change effective.

V. "Toward Educational Excellence": A Model for Making Change

Several administrators interviewed in one multi-campus district for this study referred to the use of the district-wide "Five Year Master Plan." Two individuals reported that this plan for institutional development provides for the establishment of specific goals and encourages the organization of task force structures to implement these goals. One administrator, during the interview, provided a pamphlet, "Toward Educational Excellence" as an example of operational planning developed from the "Five Year Master Plan" using a task force structure. The goal of the Task Force is to provide:

> direction to the expressed need for recommitment to excellence in the teaching/learning process as supported by the board, faculty and staff. (p. 4)

A review of this project provides insights into the implementation of change theory and planning.

"Toward Educational Excellence" is a project dedicated to the "maintenance and improvement of the quality of education" (p. 6). The resulting document addresses the issue of change as a process and recognizes the necessity for action and responsibilities to implement selected goals. Completed in July, 1985, this publication states that the district is in its

seventieth year of service and wishes to "be engaged in a process of self-examination, renewal and commitment" (p. 2). Acting in response to national, regional and local concerns regarding low levels or academic preparation among entry level college students, the Task Force was initiated to resolve these issues. Nineteen members of the faculty staff and administration were chosen for the Task Force based on "expertise, training and experience with students and leadership characteristics" (p. 4). The purpose of this Task Force was to develop a program of institutional change in the form of identification of relevant issues, identification of resources and selection of methodology to monitor and evaluation toward goals during the next five academic years (p. 6).

An emphasis on change theory and planning is evident in the guidelines "developed for consideration" during implementation of the objectives:

> 1. The need to change has to be clearly established; there must be a district-wide willingness to recognize the existence of problems to achieve a readiness for change.
>
> 2. Any proposed changes to improve the quality of education must apply to day and evening students and full- and part-time students.
>
> 3. Since recommended changes are likely to increase the cost of instruction, recommendations will be evaluated for cost and placed in priority order so as to determine the extent to which excellence can be achieved within the present financial resources and extent to which additional resources must be sought (p. 6).

Each of the six recommendations includes a rationale, a statement from the Task Force in terms of specific concerns addressed, and a list of conditions necessary for implementation of the recommendations. The six recommendations are as follows:

1. Reasonable levels of expected basic competencies in reading, writing, and computation should be established for student entry into college level courses. Once the levels are established, a system for mandatory testing and placement should be implemented at the colleges.

2. Curricular coherence should be a goal for courses within a discipline and within all programs offered by the colleges.

3. A coordinated system of recruitment, admissions, orientation, and intervention should be implemented at the colleges.

4. The teaching of effective reading should be a goal of every course offered by the colleges.

5. An examination of all factors affecting faculty excellence, including employment, staff development, working conditions, and instructional support services should be undertaken.

6. The teaching of effective writing should be a goal of every course offered by the colleges.

The rationale, for example, for the recommendation on the basic competencies features quotations from Cohen and Brawer's The American Community College, and Involvement in Learning: A Final Report of the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education (p. 9). After the rationale of each recommendation, the Task Force provides a short summation of application of the issue to the community

college district.

The suggestion for writing for example is as follows:

> While composition courses emphasize effective writing skills, a consistent pattern of writing is not demanded in all courses. Conceptual thinking and critical analysis, integral to a liberal education, are best developed and expressed in learning situations which require students to formulate essays, develop paragraphs and express their thoughts in clear, effective prose (p. 25).

The final section for each recommendation entitled "Conditions Necessary" lists extensive plans and organizational development to facilitate the specific changes. Included in the list for "faculty factors" are such items as improvement in screening/hiring processes, re-examination of faculty overload, part-time faculty roles, systems for faculty development and morale concerns (p. 22). Recommendations then are supported by strong arguments in rationale statements, refinement in terms of institutional concerns and a listing of specific tasks which must be accomplished prior to the completion of the recommendations. Thus, a sound unified plan for the project's development and completion is presented.

The final section of "Toward Educational Excellence" acknowledges the

> diligence of the Task Force members, their insights and their commitment to a renewed pursuit of excellence (p. 27).

The plan is acknowledged as an initial step "in the process" of making "strategic decisions to focus college resources on strengthening the quality 'of courses and programs'" (p. 27).

Listed as a presenter and consultant, Richard Richardson, Arizona State University and author of Governance for the Two-Year Colleges provided advice on the development of "Toward Educational Excellence". His influence is evident in the emphasis of a "participative structure" during the process of change implementation. A focus on cooperative relationships and the emphasis of goal development and overall process of integrated decision-making including mechanisms to monitor and alter the process if necessary is emphasized. Richardson's direction can be seen specifically in the general planning process and mechanism established to implement institutional change.

How "Toward Educational Excellence" will be implemented, refined and related to areas of institutional development remains to be seen. The guidelines of the project, however, provide the institutional impetus for change through the use of the recommendations, rationale and necessary conditions. The mechanisms of participative components throughout the system and the monitoring function of various groups implementing

change provide the system with the beginning administrative initiative to make a difference.

VI. Problem Areas: The Delicate Balance of Goals and Communications

Throughout the literature and administrative interviews, two general areas of difficulty in community college planning and implementation of change are the issues of goals and communication. Because of problems in goal selection and communications within the growing complexity of the environment, the community college administrator's endeavors to make a change become more difficult. As administrators attempt to implement change successfully, a "balance is critical in academic management" (Keller, p. 167). The "present situation in higher education" according to Keller appears to be the tendency for administrators to "stalemate and muddle through with a wariness toward change". The need for a much more active management, emphasizing innovation and adaptation is necessary.

Several have noted that the community college is complicated by vague goals. Richardson (p. 6) states that community colleges experience a "confusion" as to national goals and lack clearly defined expectations for their role in higher education. This may be a result of the "late arrival" of the community college as a "national priority." He continues that most community colleges develop a general set of objectives (p. 214) but that they receive little attention except in

relation to visits from regional accreditation associations ". . . to demonstrate that objectives are being met". The "rapidly changing and vacillating leadership" on the national level provides little direction for this concern. At the local level, this problem is evident in the inability to resolve the conflict "which seems to be the rule rather than the exception". Palola charges that institutions are active in "goal evasion" (p. 15) and describes the laxity with which organizations specify objectives, purposes, and "make statements . . . of no useful basis". Community colleges need to establish goals to ensure the institution's healthy survival. Through the use of setting educational objectives "in a creative and economically sound manner" change is facilitated through the support of institutional decision making and resource allocation (p. 66). Substantial goal setting based on a sound institutional planning process allows community colleges to "face the future, knowing what you want to be as well as how to become it."

Communications in the formal stages of planning and implementation present additional obstacles. In terms of information flow, Judy and Levine note that administrators face the challenge externally to "marshall better evidence to convince government and other sources of funding of needs" (p. 427). The

appropriate information must also flow internally to the levels of the institution relating to the specific plans and implementation. Walker describes the administrative process:

> It is not enough to make decisions well, carefully and consultatively. The moment difficult decisions are made, another process must begin. They must be interpreted and marketed. (p. 57)

Eble provides practical suggestions that are designed to reduce "the clutter and make the most of information and planning" (p. 59). He adds that long-range planning often "seems to be imposed from on high" and individuals feel little enthusiasm for such mandated policies. Thus, the skills of communication are essential. Williams notes that even if the organizational structure and components implement change and communication, frequently "circumstances not envisioned in the flow chart" and conflicts within the organization occur. Williams continues his discussion of organizational communication and administration by commenting that "any generalized approach to administration is bound to fail" (p. 349-350). The administrator, then, must evaluate each plan and implementation of the change and determine the appropriate goal setting structures and communication scheme for that particular circumstance.

VII. Trends in Community College Change: The Development of a Planning Culture

After an analysis of the issues surrounding the community college and change, several trends can be observed. The recognition of the need to establish a culture that facilitates change in an appropriate and effective manner underlies each of the trends. Other areas include coalition development with other bodies of governance, organizational and personnel development. The participatory and contingency processes of change appear to be methodologies gaining in acceptance and use. Walker notes that the post-secondary institution can be "incredibly tenacious in counter-relations to being shoved . . . when changes are initiated under forced draft, they may not stick" (p. 96). Community college researchers, critics and leaders support these trends as potential solutions to the problems of community college administration.

Essential to any sort of growth in the community college is the establishment of "a new planning culture" (Keller, p. 167). Administrators must recognize the required need for improvement (Blackwell, p. 104) and participate in a program which provides a "continuous review of internal administrative efficiency, and establish a center for institutional research". The establishment of such an office pro-

vides the community college with a "focal point" for the collection and analysis of data. Whetten cites the need of administrators to realize that the college environment is unique (p. 38) and that administrators need to be aware of their own behaviors during the planning and implementation processes. This can be accomplished through "increased chronicling" and the identification of the effective characteristics of coalition management, "aggressive opportunism" leadership style, and the maintenance of the balance between process and outcome. The world of higher education and particularly the community college represent complex organizations.

To establish success, administrators should perform the "critical task" and use "social science interpretations" as a means for analysis. With a dynamic process emphasis, the administrator is advised to closely observe political themes in the environment. The establishment of an administrative "planning culture" is the first step in planning and implementing change.

Another feature of the planning culture is the growing recognition of the importance of developing a variety of coalitions. At the national level, there is a movement underway to establish a national mission statement for the community college that would "clearly

spell out philosophy, purpose, and mission" (Bender, p. 57). At the state level, participation should be encouraged to "provide for substantive local participation in policy, priority, and program direction" (Bender, p. 57). This can be accomplished through special state legislative commissions and through the development of "close cooperative roles" among state institutions. Bender also suggests a "strong advocacy for community colleges" at the state level to provide "a significant voice in the formulation of regulations and standards" enforced by the various arms of the government (p. 59). Palola has noted that when statewide planning and coordination occur during a "massive expansion in higher education, the educational autonomy and the level of college performance increases" (p. 540). Involvement in both state and national legislatures provides community colleges with input into those external government forces which affect their environment.

Within the community, coalition building for the community college is seen as a key (Briggs, p. 25) for "bringing citizens together to shape the community's future" and to "tailor the process to the unique needs and styles of individual communities". Franklin and Small refer to this phenomenon as the "interface of college and community" which create "new dimensions in

scope and access." Bender states that given the complex and economic and political problems, the community will:

> make the imperative that those who serve in community-based institution work with others within the community and at the state and federal levels. Better understanding of the interdependent relationships at all levels is basic to successful service to the people and their community.

Zwerling concludes in his criticism of the community college that it must respond in a "non-hierarchical fashion" by analyzing "where the power traditionally lies, and how to organize it to balance it" (p. 277).

Another movement that is growing in efforts to expedite change at the community college level is the stress on participatory, individual and organizational development. Organizational development, discussed previously as a model, has as its major emphasis the promotion of systematic change, dependent on the "deliberate assessment of where an organizations wants to be, followed by where it is, and a plan developed to close the gap" (Hammons, p. 11). The organization of the community college needs to be modified so that structures facilitating change develop. Hammons continues to say that organizational development is "not a fad . . . rather it is a new concept destined to be around" as a mechanism to facilitate change. Lab trainings, survey research and feedback have provided

valuable contributions to this interpretation of change.

In terms of professional development of community college administrative staff, a large group of authors suggest that this is the most efficient way to increase organizational efficiency. There is a concern that such opportunities are not available on a widespread basis. Fryer notes that graduate education programs "do not lend themselves to staff development (p. 106), and Le Croy extends this argument by stating that the leadership development process "must continue beyond experiences provided in a graduate education program". The content for leadership development requires the process of "personal and interpersonal reeducation" to develop the "qualities of independence and a capacity for autonomous interdependence" (Shepherd, p. 519). Such training needs to be:

> broad-based academic training, meaningful work experiences and important personality dimensions such as flexibility and persistence are required. However, knowledge of the present context for leadership and the anticipated changes in economic, social, demographic and technological conditions is important or leaders who will guide the future development of community colleges. (Alfred, p. 1)

Alfred adds that the "critical element" is preparation for the decision-making process. This comes about only after a "thorough understanding of academic organization, administrative procedures, faculty values, and

the interests and concerns of those whom they will lead" (p. 18). They also should be provided with opportunities for delegation of authority and "how to lead the change process" (p. 18) This should all occur through a socialization process and a mentoring program in which "peers and subordinates" are available to provide input. Fryer emphasizes that preparation should address "principles of planning" (p. 106) and include assessment of the processes and results of a variety of planning techniques" that are "suited to those turbulent and uncertain conditions (p. 106) Fryer feels that this is best accomplished through the "exciting and potentially effective model of regional consortiums for community colleges" affiliated with a research university (p. 106). Such an example is the development of the University of Texas at Austin's Community College Leadership Program. Martorana and Kuhns say changes in professional development are required for the "health if not the survival" of the community college (p. 7). Elsner says that currently

> community colleges are forced to mold and select leaders from the shaky, on-the-job crucible of politics, pressure groups, internal lineage and word of mouth. This approach will not supply the farsighted innovative thinking needed for an effective response to tomorrow's demands. Moreover, current practices in management and staff development will inexorably create a vacuum at the top.

Elsner, like numerous other authors, indicates that a

"crisis at the leadership level is developing". Thus the preparation of leaders must include an assessment of planning techniques, especially those suited to turbulent and uncertain conditions (Frey, p. 106).

Two trends in terms of approaches to management of change are the participatory and contingency interpretations of change previously discussed in the chapter outlining Models. Richardson's model of participatory mechanism also reappeared in the local administrative reviews and the model for change sections. Many in the field support this approach, and Eble notes that administration should encourage "more direct involvement in the planning" (p. 62) by seeing that "those contributing information are informed of results", thus reducing suspicions. A "level of involvement and cooperation is necessary" for the implementation of long-range plans.

Fryer reiterates that the "critical topic" of leadership is that of accomplishing the work of the organization through the group process.

> In today's complex large educational organizations, few decisions are made by administrators in isolation. Almost all decisions are made during or after elaborate consultation. Often it is the consultation process itself that is the vehicle by which decisions are made. Future leaders need training in the effective use of groups as well as the process of group leadership and motivation. (p. 103)

Bennis predicts that "we will see an increase in the

numbers of planned change programs toward less bureaucratic and more participatory open systems and adaptive structures (p. 45).

Contingency approaches to administration represent another process emphasis that can provide administrators with a system applicable to all situations. Essentially, the contingency approach assumes the uniqueness of each administrative problem. Planning for change and implementation come about in a unique setting, and administrative action is determined after an analysis of the individual circumstances.

Through the local administrative interviews, the contingency approach was evident in references to dealing with each of the circumstances as a unique one in the planning and implementing of change. Those interviewed also alluded to the changing environment of the community college, and that efforts to work out new additional policies need to be developed.

Richman and Farmer in Leadership, Goals and Power in Higher Education state that in administration, a contingency approach is needed that:

> depends on the actual situation, circumstances, conditions and problems. It is clearly not a totally yes or no or black and white issue -- it is a gray one that can be best determined empirically, by trying, experimenting, and often, by trial and error. (p. 18)

Through the acceptance of this process to administrative solutions to change, it becomes "possible to

operationalize goal systems and related priorities to verify goal systems and related priorities to verify goal performance" (p. 33). The contingency approach

> seeks to understand the interrelationships within and among the subsystems as well as between the organization and its external environment and to define the pattern of relationships. (p. 6)

The authors continue to describe the emphasis of the "multivariate nature of organizations (p. 7) and attempt to understand and operate in specific circumstances using contingency methodology. Richman and Farmer continue that "much still needs to be done in regard to the development of management and organizational theories" especially in terms of "predictive and prescriptive theories . . . for colleges." Thus the contingency theories and approaches can be effective and useful; "there will never be a universally applicable theory of management" (p. 34). The contingency viewpoint suggests that there is a great variety of "managerial practices and organizational designs" that are most appropriate for specific situations (p. 8). Gollattascheck in College Leadership for Community Renewal states that there simply are no "step-by-step instructions or cookbook approaches." Institutions must be developed in a community and fitted to the problems and resources of that community. A uniform set of instructions would be impossible (preface). The

contingency approach provides an understanding of the environment and allows for the uniqueness of each administrative circumstance in the change process.

VIII. Conclusions: Dealing with the Challenges

The community college is currently struggling to deal with the rapidly changing and chaotic environment it finds itself a part of. As the community college attempts to be "all things to all people" it is especially vulnerable to many pressures. These include internal pressures such as faculty activism, program competition, financial rivalry, poor communication, and a lack of directing goals. External pressures include individual, political, business and industry pressures as well as state,regional and national government mandates. A new external pressure appears to be the development of special purpose quasi-governmental boards which also affect the operation of the community college. This environment of pressures forces the administrator to operate in a struggle as he/she attempts to make appropriate decisions for the institution.

Perhaps this troublesome environment is a function of the community college's uniqueness. It attempts to be a post-secondary institution, providing college opportunities with established and transferable programs to the community. It is also a governmental unit, involved in the assessment and collection of tax monies, and representative in its nature to the community it serves. These confronting issues all occur

within a broader environment in which social and economical changes are occurring. As these broader problems become localized within the community college's district, it is this institution that is looked to as a means for solving these problems. Thus, the community college's unique existence in the midst of these pressures force it into a role of vulnerability, as it attempts to address issues from these diverse pressures.

The recognition of these confounding pressures and resulting dilemmas have forced community college administrators to search for ways of dealing with these situations. An indication of this effort is the development of theoretical research, professional development, and educational opportunities which address the problems of community college administrators. Underlying all of these activities is the recognition that a new way of thinking about administration and implementation of change must evolve. Through such a professional recognition, new attitudes about administration foster the development of methods and strategies. There is already a wide recognition among community college administrators that more experience and expertise are needed for such positions. There is also a growing concern for the preparation of future administrators as well as the continued support

of those in such positions. To handle the challenges effectively, community college administrators require the support and expansion of a knowledge base to enable them to best plan and implement changes.

From these demands, research, development and new understandings of the change process are emerging. Frequently in the past, administrators executed their jobs without a great deal of thought to the future. Now planning strategies along with required modifications are an established part of administrative duties. The consideration of the administrator role as an agent of change contributes to governance as a participatory process. Administrators also recognize the uniqueness of each decision and its environment as they attempt to "fit the plan" to the set of circumstances. The "fitting" also includes the acceptance of a "trouble shooting" component in which the administrator determines areas of conflict and works to negotiate areas of conflict. Information is now viewed as an essential element in the administrative process to plan for change, and a great thrust to develop both formal and informal informational systems is emphasized. In short, the administrator's position is recognized as a predicament, but innovation and development in the field will provide direction to address the challenges of the administrator.

Thus, the change process at the community college will be improved and enhanced as administrators recognize contributory research and new approaches for implementation. Administrators will be able to select from "viable alternatives" (Richardson, Blocker and Bender, p. viii) in their efforts to respond appropriately to the challenge of community college change.

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